



Fondazione

VILLA RUSSIZ

Overview

Villa Russiz has long been regarded as one of the finest wineries in Friuli, as well as one of the most philanthropic in the world. The estate was founded in 1869 by French-born Count Théodor de La Tour, who brought to the region the finest clones he could find from his native country, selecting classic varieties most suitable for Collio's unique terroir. His vineyards were the first in the region to be planted with authentic French rootstock — Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Cabernets, Pinot Noir and Riesling. The count was a brilliant agriculturalist in advance of his times and grafted European vines onto American rootstock to counteract certain vine diseases, such as phylloxera, that were destroying European vineyards.

While the count was breaking new ground with his vineyards and winemaking, his wife, Countess Elvine de La Tour, was equally tireless in her philanthropic endeavors: the care of orphaned and homeless young girls. The work she initiated was carried on in the 20th century, and after World War I the estate was donated to the Italian state to be maintained as a non-profit organization, Foundation Villa Russiz. A home on the estate grounds for disadvantaged and orphaned children is funded by the sale of the estate's wines. Les Enfants IGT is a wine produced as a testament to their commitment to the children of Italy.

Collio D.O.C. is a narrow region at the eastern edge of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, in Italy's northeast corner. It is bordered by Slovenia to the east, Austria to the north and the Adriatic Sea to the south. Much of the region is mountainous ("Collio" means "hillsides"), but the south-facing hillsides are protected from harsh north winds by the Julian Alps, while the cool sea breezes waft over vineyards bathed in Mediterranean sunlight. The soil is a particular type of marl known as "ponca," which is clay that is rich in limestone and sandstone; it has proven to be excellent for vines, providing minerals that enhance the aromatics of the wines. The microclimate of the area, combined with the ideal soil composition and south-facing hillsides interlaced with terraced vineyards, make Collio a unique terroir for the production of extraordinary wines, just as Count de la Tour envisioned nearly 150 years ago.



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